Record of Bibliophiles Book Club for the meeting of January 9, 2019.

In this meeting we discussed the book “Educated” by Tara Westover. Almost everybody indicated that they found it to be very engaging and interesting. However “engaging” for a number of members at the meeting, and in their email messages, indicated that they were also distressed at the abuse that the author experienced as related in the book. Some were concerned that some of the elements of abuse may not have even been fully discussed in the book in order for Ms. Westover to maintain family relationships or because it was too painful to relate. Similarly many were aware of the fact that memory can be highly selective in such cases and there may have been some lack of authenticity to the story because of the problems with recovering childhood memory. Several people commented that some recent media representations indicated the family’s (at least the parents’) strong dissent from some of the events described. However it was discussed that the author herself made reference in the text to some variance in family members’ memories of certain events.

Several attendees commented that this book was reminiscent of many of the elements of the “Glass Castle” and “Hillbilly Elegy.” The group discussed the remarkable accomplishments of Ms. Westover and of some of her siblings and contrasted that with the lack of worldly accomplishment of some other siblings. Almost everyone seems to have agreed that the book constituted a great recognition of the growth of one’s self and her need to make inquiry into the world beyond the peculiar and insular life that she had experienced. It was noted that despite many dysfunctional elements in her childhood, she received some effective mentoring and emotional support from her mother and from educators at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

Several people also commented that they thought there may be some psychological harm still present in the author and noted that some of her media appearances have indicated that she is still trying to reconcile with her family.

Of necessity, this brief summary leaves out many of the comments made at the meeting and people are welcome to add further to the discussion of this title as they wish through group emails.

The next selection as voted on by members at the meeting is “Red Notice” by Bill Browder. That book will be the subject of our discussions at our next meeting of March 6, 2019.

Robert Hamer